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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-first session
13 May-7 June 1991
Agenda item 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Boris GOUDIMA (Ukrainian SSR)

III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Methodology for monitoring and reporting the programme performance of the United Nations

1. At its 15th meeting on 22 May, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the methodology for monitoring and reporting the programme performance of the United Nations (A/46/173).

Discussion

2. Some delegations noted that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had recommended that the process of monitoring the programme performance of the United Nations should be suspended, pending the development of a satisfactory methodology. Several delegations did not share that view.

Conclusions and recommendations

3. The report was reviewed against the background of the conclusions and recommendations made by the Committee at its thirtieth session (A/45/16 (Part Two)), the recommendation of the ACABQ on this subject and General Assembly resolution 45/253.

4. The Committee recalled Article V, Monitoring of Programme Implementation, of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

5. The Committee also recalled that two essential objectives of monitoring were to indicate the extent to which activities mandated in the programme budget had been implemented, and to shed light on the changes introduced to the programme budget during its implementation and to explain the reasons for these changes. The Committee noted that performance reports in general did not contain sufficient information on the changes introduced.

6. The Committee acknowledged that the proposed changes in the reporting of programme performance were not of a fundamental nature but could still be a basis for further improvements:

(a) Reporting performance according to four separate formats, as indicated in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General, should facilitate a better coverage of the very diverse types of activities undertaken by the Organization.

(b) A more thorough analysis of the changes introduced to the activities described in the programme budget would be provided as outlined in paragraph 9 of the report.

These changes take place at the initiative of functional, sectoral or regional legislative bodies or are added at the initiative of the Secretariat, after the General Assembly adopts the programme budget. The description and reasons for these changes, accompanied by relevant tables, would clarify important aspects of the process of implementation of the programme budget.

7. The Committee noted the conceptual distinction between monitoring programme implementation and evaluating programme quality and relevance to the objectives embodied in the medium-term plan. The report on programme performance should, however, contain an overall assessment summing up the main characteristics of the implementation of the programme budget during a biennium without involving costs disproportionate to the value of the information provided. This assessment should provide, inter alia, information that would facilitate the identification by Member States of outdated and inefficient activities and reformulation of programmes in the light of newly identified objectives. It should also suggest areas that would require an evaluation by the internal evaluation unit, the Joint Inspection Unit, or other independent evaluators.

8. The Committee also emphasized that the report should retain a qualitative approach, in accordance with the Regulations and Rules governing the Programme Planning and Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and give percentage figures on the implementation of each category of activities; this should facilitate a greater accountability for the implementation of the programme.

9. The Committee stressed the importance of a review of resource utilization and welcomed the inclusion of information on the role of extrabudgetary resources in the funding of activities. The Committee also noted that the estimated work-months utilized for the delivery of groups of activities was a rough indication of the level of resources used. Future programme performance reports should continue to provide such information and the possibility should be explored for providing corresponding figures for the initially estimated allocation of work-months. While this approach would bring a closer link between programme performance and budget performance, the Committee noted that such a linkage was at present unclear. The Committee stressed that one of the main reasons for this was the lack of a system of responsibility and accountability of programme managers, as well as of a clear formulation of programme objectives, as distinct from programme activities. The Committee recommended that such a system should be established.

10. The Committee noted that the proposed methodology was closely linked with the revised format of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on this revised format are therefore relevant to the monitoring of programme implementation.